Dublin March 12. 1862

Dear Mr May

About Miss Harriet Martineau. I think the tone of the letters which gave so much offence was affronting. It was in the style of an angry governess to her pupils & I am heartily sorry for it. But the fact remains that if you were to put together all that has been well said & written by every one else on this side of the Atlantic in favour of the abolitionists & the anti slavery cause, & in defence of the United States, it would in my opinion be outweighed by that which has proceeded from the pen of that infirm, deaf, lonely woman at Ambleside. No other individual can compare with her achievements in this way. It has been done with cheerfulness, ability & modesty. Indeed I don't know of her intellectual equal among female writers, when the extent & the excellence of her productions is considered as well as the philanthropic character of the objects she seeks to obtain. This I say in mitigation of judgment. She is unselfish. She is generous. And only that faults of temper & of manner generally go further against any individual than any talents or virtues go in their favour, H.M. would be regarded with rather greater admiration by every American abolitionist. I don't wonder that it is otherwise — but I am sorry for her sake & for yours. She is indefatigable & entirely reliable. The assistance of others is weak & spasmodic in comparis

When Bright's speech at Rochdale was able & generous — but until your troubles began I never looked on him as friendly to the abolitionists. The Leaguers had the busts of Calhoun & MacDuffie in their Board Room though not aware of their atrocious character as High Priests of Chattel Slavery. Cobden & Bright are benefactors of their country as the great inaugurators of the Free Trade system by which we benefit so much — but they have not done the hundredth part so much for your cause as H. M. who is the writer of the numerous leaders in the Daily News on American subjects — & the D. N. is the most respectable daily paper in London. I am continually astonished at the strength, richness, raciness & fullness of information in her articles. I feel quite sure that no matter how she may be snubbed by the abolitionists she will be as true as steel to their cause. I don't wonder at the offence taken — but considering how hard you have been in the habit of hitting & what blows you have been used to take without wincing, I am sorry that one of your oldest & best friends should be touched in a way she will feel so keenly. Much allowance should be made for her infirmities & her isolation which make it almost impossible she should always make a perfectly just estimate of the way in which people will accept her rebukes — which I admit are rather high pitched.

I will cheerfully print your le paper in the Advocate. There you will also see a letter from the Spectator's English correspondent in U.S. to the same effect

About John Brown your censure is all I could ever print, & I thank you for it. My wish is simply that Miss Estlin's cash out of pocket sh^d be reduced as low as can reasonably be looked for — "just as way opens" as the old Friends used to say. The cost for the copies left which are all bound would be about 2.4^d per copy delivered in Dublin. This is the nett cost price.

You will be glad to hear that Mrs May & her daughter arrived safely & are as well as could be expected after such a long voyage at this time of the year. Mrs May is as busy as a tailor at some sewing or crochet, or may be working for the army like Miss Nightingale. "Adeline" [I am nearly sure] walks in maiden meditation, fancy free. Mamma always sits down. Daughter always stands still. But strange to say, though they are both most heartily welcome at Greenfield, neither has spoken a syllable since their arrival. My wife is a good talker when she talks and they might have a pleasant time if they could remember the distance that lies between them & Leicester. ~~[illegible]~~

I know from all hands how general the Anti-English feeling is in America. I also know how absurd it seems to us here and how general the desire has been on the part of the government & the mass of the influential classes to act with fairness and to give no just ground of offence. Is it not absurd except in case of evident, open, hostility to be angry with a whole nation, & should not credit be given to them at least for good intentions till the contrary is proved. The latest news does not indicate much chance for the slaves. It rather indicates a desire for Union again at any price — and I fear if a hollow truce is patched up at the cost of the negro. it will be but the beginning of another sorrowful chapter in your national history. Rejoiced as I am that the North appears to be on the high road to victory, I fear that a very great deal remains to be done before any thing like a real union can be reestablished between the North & the South. And even if the government were disposed to put slavery down, the vast extent of the Southern territory & the disaffection & mortified pride of the semibarbarous Southern people must prove great impediments in the way of reconstructing a stable & energetic political system.

I could hardly express to you how constantly you are on my mind & in my thoughts, & how earnest are my desires that all may go well with the cause of freedom & with its friends in your country.

Richard Allen called a day or two since to complain that he had not received his Liberator for nearly three months. Will you kindly make enquiry. If this be so the numbers should be sent & the error corrected in future. I cant account for this, as mine comes quite regularly. R.A. pays his subscription regularly — & his wife gives 20 dollars a year to the Society's funds. With thanks & best wishes to Mrs & Miss May,

I am Yours affectionately

Richd D Webb

Notwithstanding your request that I should let you know, I nearly forgot to say that your letter being over weight cost 2/- extra postage. I enclose stamps for the enclosed letter 2 will be found in Boston he tells me.

MS. B.1.6 v.15 p. 85